



## **Testimony to the Education Committee Public Hearing on March 15, 2023**

### **Comments on:**

- **HB 6879 - AN ACT CONCERNING TEACHER CERTIFICATION**
- **HB 6884 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION**
- **SB 1199 - AN ACT CONCERNING EQUITY IN EDUCATION**

Good afternoon Senator McCrory, Representative Currey, Senator Berthel, Representative McCarty, and other distinguished members of the Education Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on several bills today.

My name is Cesarina Thompson, and I am the current Vice President of the Connecticut Chapter of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE-CT). I am Dean of College of Education, Nursing and Health Professions at the University of Hartford. AACTE-CT is an association of thirteen Connecticut public and private universities and colleges with Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) whose primary goal is to promote and support high quality teaching, education, and leadership in Connecticut schools.

Below are comments on each of the bills listed above.

### **HB 6879 - AN ACT CONCERNING TEACHER CERTIFICATION**

Section 2 of the bill would create a Commission to Modernize the Educator Workforce and we are pleased that there will be a representative from an educator preparation program offered at a public or independent institution of higher education in the state. We are generally supportive of such a commission to review and analyze current statutes and regulations governing educator preparation programs and certification. There are many existing regulations governing teacher preparation programs and related education regulations which have not been updated for approximately twenty years. We have been working in collaboration with the state Department of Education to update the regulations. By updating the statutes and regulations, this will also help as part of an overall effort to recruit and retain high quality diverse candidates into the education profession.

### **HB 6884 - AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION**

We wanted to provide comments on various sections of this bill. We are supportive of Section 1 which would provide a minimum teacher salary level. Section 2 provides a \$500 credit for teachers with an

initial certificate. These measures will definitely help to provide a much-needed boost across our state to help attract aspiring teachers to the profession.

At this time, we cannot support Sections 4 – 6 of this bill which would cease edTPA and replace it with another pre-service assessment. First, edTPA is a valid pre-service assessment that helps to credibly measure a student teacher's ability to teach in the classroom. The edTPA is a performance-based assessment which is built on the core aspects of teaching such as planning for instruction, engaging students in learning, assessing learning, and supporting academic language development. This pre-service performance assessment aligns with the Educator Preparation Advisory Council (EPAC) EPAC principles, the Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) standards, as well as statutory requirements.

This pre-service assessment was adopted by the Connecticut State Board of Education in 2016 based upon the Educator Preparation Advisory Council (EPAC) recommendations after several years of thorough review, analysis, and input from professional education organizations, representatives from PK-12 schools, Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs), and other entities. Since 2016, Connecticut education experts, officials, and leaders dedicated numerous resources and spent several years preparing and collaborating with higher education institutions, educator preparation programs, administrators, and faculty to develop programs to properly prepare their students to align the objectives with the edTPA assessment.

Section 5 does not include any involvement of the private colleges and universities in the development of another type of preservice performance assessment. It only includes the president of the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities and the dean of UConn's Neag School of Education to work with the Commissioner of Education on a new preservice assessment. Should Section 4 of this bill move forward, we strongly advocate that private colleges and universities with EPPs should be included in developing a pre-service assessment since they are equally involved in the educating and training of our future teacher workforce.

Finally, Sections 4 – 6 would force our EPPs to incur significant costs and divert considerable resources towards creating and implementing another reliable pre-service assessment tool. This would occur at a time when all our resources, financial and otherwise, are stretched very thin. Therefore, if this bill moves forward, we are requesting that all EPP programs, both private and public, be provided the option to continue to use edTPA if they choose and not be mandated to adopt another type of pre-service assessment as recommended in this bill.

### **SB 1199 - AN ACT CONCERNING EQUITY IN EDUCATION**

In Section 1 of the bill, we would request that educator preparation programs offered by private colleges and universities here in Connecticut are included to participate in the proposed CSDE educator apprenticeship initiative. Currently the bill as drafted only includes educator preparation programs offered by a public institution of higher education.

We are supportive of the compensation outlined in Section 1 for students for their clinical experience, for their student teaching experience, and for full-time certified teachers who are assisting students in their student teaching experience.

In Section 4 of the bill, we are supportive of the expanding funding and opportunities as outlined for the Aspiring Educators Scholarship Program that would include an annual scholarship up to ten thousand dollars to each diverse student enrolled in good standing in a teacher preparation program.

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